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PAIGE RENSE NOLAND

// BY RUTHANNE JOHNSON

JUST REWARDS: There are hundreds of reasons why Paige Rense Noland is receiving top honors this January at The HSUS's "To The Rescue! From Cruelty to Kindness" benefit in Florida. Like Roodle, an emaciated Labradoodle rescued along with nearly 200 other dogs from a South Carolina puppy mill. Or Frances, a deeply matted, flea-infested shih tzu saved from the same breeder. Or the tiny Chihuahua who lived in a filthy kennel with the decaying remains of her two puppies before she and 103 other dogs were removed from a Mississippi breeding mill.

The rescues of these and other dogs came about thanks to The HSUS's Puppy Mill Tip Line Reward Fund, which Noland established in 2011, believing a generous incentive would encourage people to share information about squalid breeding facilities in their communities. Marketing such as billboards and postcards in the 10 worst puppy mill states advertised the \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of puppy mill operators. Noland's instincts proved right: The calls rolled in, resulting in rescue operations in five states. Arrests were made, convictions followed, and rewards were distributed (with more pending).

BUILDING REFORM: For 40 years, Noland commanded the helm of *Architectural Digest*, mingling with the likes of Cher, Michael Jackson, and Elizabeth Taylor—and refusing to publish photographs of home interiors containing animal trophies or rugs. "It's outrageous to use a noble creature as a rug," she says.

Not long before she retired in 2010, Noland watched an unsettling *Oprah Winfrey Show* segment on puppy mills. "I was totally ignorant of what happened to these creatures who have no voice and

are totally helpless." She learned more through documentaries and began donating to animal welfare organizations. She even adopted a 10-year-old puppy mill survivor from the Lange Foundation in Los Angeles. Skinny and traumatized, Lucy (shown below) became her inspiration. "Taking care of Lucy and watching her change and become happy and outgoing and healthy just made me feel like ... I could make a difference."

BRANCHING OUT: Wanting to make a bigger impact, Noland began focusing her philanthropy on The HSUS, establishing the reward fund as well as the Breeder Surrender Fund, which cares for older, non-productive dogs whom puppy mill operators no longer want. She's also given to the Humane Society Legislative Fund, an HSUS affiliate, in support of stronger animal protection laws. Her latest project is a forthcoming book on U.S. animal sanctuaries with famed photojournalist Harry Benson.

Why does she do it? "Helping animals has given ... my life a focal point," she says. "And, I don't know, perhaps that makes us a little better."

➤ **FIND OUT MORE** about the Jan. 23 benefit in Palm Beach at humanesociety.org/rescuebenefit.



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